

REMARKS

Claims 1-7 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, Applicant amends claims 1 and 2. No new matter is added.

The Office Action rejects claim 2 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

Applicant respectfully asserts that the phrase "according to a resistance" is clear. Paragraphs [0006], [0038], and [0039] of Applicant's specification disclose that the directions of the gas outlets are determined depending on an expected resistance of a corresponding interior member of the airbag. For example, according to the first exemplary embodiment, roof head lining 31 has an increased expected resistance due to assist grip 35 (paragraph [0038] and Fig. 4). Furthermore, according to the first exemplary embodiment, a gas outlet corresponding to a region having a large expected resistance may be oriented to supply a large amount of gas and a gas outlet corresponding to a region having a small expected resistance may be oriented to supply a small amount of gas (paragraph [0039]). Thus, the direction of the gas outlet is determined based on the expected resistance.

In order to expedite prosecution, Applicant amends claim 2 to recite "expected resistance." Thus, amended claim 2 makes explicit that the claimed "resistance" is an expected value rather than the actual resistance experienced during deployment of the airbag. Thus, the claimed "resistance" cannot reasonably be considered an indefinite causal relationship, as apparently alleged by the Office Action.

In order to further expedite prosecution, Applicant amends claim 2 to recite that "each region of the airbag is determined based on an expected resistance" rather than the direction of the gas outlet being determined based on the resistance. Thus, claim 2 recites a location as suggested by the Office Action. However, Applicant respectfully submits that reciting the

region rather than the direction of the gas outlet does not narrow the claim since the direction of the outlet is dependent on the region according to claim 1.

Because, based on at least the foregoing, claim 2 is definite, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection be withdrawn.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-7 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over JP 2000-127885 A to Mitsuyoshi et al. (hereinafter "Mitsuyoshi").¹ Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

Mitsuyoshi does not disclose, teach, or suggest "a plurality of gas outlets provided in the gas distribution pipe and opened in at least two different peripheral directions along the gas distribution pipe, each peripheral direction depending on a region of the airbag," as recited in amended claim 1. Support for amended claim 1 may be found at least in paragraphs [0004], [0005], [0007], [0008], [0031], [0032], [0035], [0036], [0038], and [0039] and Figs. 4 and 5.

The Office Action first alleges that openings 76 and 74a in Fig. 8 of Mitsuyoshi disclose a plurality of gas outlets provided in the gas distribution pipe and opened in different directions depending on a region of the airbag. However, opening 74a is the end of inner tube 74 and thus cannot reasonably be considered to be in a peripheral direction along the gas distribution pipe, as recited in amended claim 1.

The Office Action second alleges that the plurality of openings 76 in Fig. 8 of Mitsuyoshi alone disclose a plurality of gas outlets provided in the gas distribution pipe and opened in different directions depending on a region of the airbag. Fig. 8 of Mitsuyoshi seems to show that the plurality of openings 76 are randomly scattered in more than one direction across the periphery of inner tube 74. However, there is no indication from Fig. 8 or

¹ For the convenience of the Patent Office, Applicant encloses a computer generated translation of Mitsuyoshi. The translation has not been reviewed for accuracy.

the disclosure of Mitsuyoshi that the direction of the openings is anything but random or in an arbitrary pattern. Paragraphs [0036] - [0040] of Mitsuyoshi disclose only that the openings 76 are drilled in inner tube 74 and do not address the direction of the openings 76.

Furthermore, that portion of Mitsuyoshi discloses that the expansion of the airbag body can be controlled by the number and magnitude of the openings 76; however, Mitsuyoshi is silent with respect to the direction of the openings 76. Thus, Mitsuyoshi cannot reasonably be considered to disclose that the direction of openings 76 has any effect whatsoever on the performance of the airbag body or that the direction of the openings were at all considered in the design.

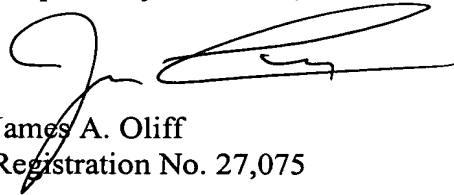
Because Mitsuyoshi cannot reasonably be considered to disclose that the direction of openings 76 has any effect whatsoever on the performance of the airbag body, the direction of the openings 76 must be considered random or in an arbitrary pattern. Accordingly, Mitsuyoshi cannot reasonably be considered to disclose, teach, or suggest that each peripheral direction of the gas outlets depends on a region of the airbag, as recited in amended claim 1.

Because, Mitsuyoshi does not disclose, teach, or even suggest "a plurality of gas outlets provided in the gas distribution pipe and opened in at least two different peripheral directions along the gas distribution pipe, each peripheral direction depending on a region of the airbag," claim 1 is patentable over Mitsuyoshi. Further, Applicant respectfully asserts that claims 2-7 are patentable for at least the reasons that claim 1 is patentable, as well as for the additional features they recite. Thus, Applicant respectfully requests withdraw of the rejection.

In view of at least the foregoing, Applicant respectfully submits that this application is in condition for allowance. Applicant earnestly solicits favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-7.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, Applicant invites the Examiner to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Enclosure:

Computer Generated Translation
of Mitsuyoshi

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